

POSTVENTION GUIDANCE: RESOURCES

Forming a postvention team

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The postvention team

The following is a summary of the people who should make up your postvention team, including their roles, responsibilities and competencies. This resource is for those involved in setting up and running a postvention team. It includes role descriptions, person specifications, and a template first meeting agenda.

Postvention team (PVT) chair

Pre-nominated senior member(s) of staff. A PVT Chair must always be available on call and able to attend campus if required. We advise identifying a couple of individuals to potentially take on this role, particularly to cover circumstances where someone may be on leave, sick or unable to immediately respond.

They should be a clear thinker who can provide direction with authority and empathy.

Responsibilities:

- Responsible for leading the whole postvention response.
- Promptly convenes PVT meetings as necessary.
- Engages key people following a critical incident and facilitates support.
- Chairs meetings.
- Co-opts additional sub-team members as appropriate.
- Establishes and maintain a supportive and ethical relationship with those directly impacted by a critical incident.

Care for students lead

Responsible for caring for and communicating to students who are affected. This is typically the Director of Student Services or equivalent with support from service colleagues, academic staff and the students' union.

Responsibilities:

- Liaises with the student's academic school to ascertain timetables for contacting students in person and addressing issues such as impending assessment deadlines and arranging mitigating circumstances.
- Engages with other students following a critical incident and facilitates academic and pastoral support and guidance.

Care for staff lead

Responsible for caring for and communicating to staff who are affected including outsourced accommodation providers and security. This is typically a senior manager with support from human resource services.

Responsibilities:

- Engages with staff following a critical incident and facilitates support.

Family liaison lead

Responsible solely for communicating with the family. Ideally, someone who knew the deceased. This member of staff will require bereavement support training as well as support for themselves, including a deputy to work with.

A sensitive and compassionate manner is crucial to secure confidence and trust of families.

Responsibilities:

- Engages with family following a critical incident, facilitates support and provides a single consistent point of contact for family.
- Provides information of additional services available for families, including signposting to support, so that they can access all available services and help.

Communications lead

This is typically the Director of Communications. They are responsible for coordinating the internal and external communications about the incident.

Responsibilities:

- Deals with internal and external communications, including any interest from the media.
- Monitors press and social media coverage.
- Supports other teams in all aspects of communication.

Administrator

Typically, this should be an executive level administrator.

Responsibilities:

- Keeps a detailed written record of all actions taken and decisions made by the PVT.
- Maintains a single referential information repository, which then serves as the 'single source of truth'.

Competence requirements of postvention team members

- resolute, compassionate and committed
- emotionally aware
- takes ownership
- inclusive, enabling and visionary leadership
- works collaboratively, but able to work independently
- delivers, facilitates, supports, and inspires
- intelligent, creative and informed practice
- can analyse information critically
- innovative and open-minded

Postvention team agenda

This is an example agenda for a Postvention team meeting.

- 1 Welcome – strategic objectives
PVT leader to be clear from the outset as to what is to be achieved
- 2 News update
What do we currently know? Informs single source of truth
- 3 First meeting confirm sub-group roles / subsequent meetings sub-group updates Support for students affected
- 4 Support for staff affected
- 5 Family liaison
- 6 Communication
Depending upon the incident additional sub-groups maybe required, for example, police liaison, coroner liaison, embassy liaison
- 7 Transition to business as usual
- 8 Review strategic priorities
- 9 Potential risks
- 10 Potential timescale for business as usual
- 11 Critical Incident Review
- 12 PVT care for ourselves / care for each other
- 13 Any other business